

Notice of Allowability	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/541,804	BELLAMY ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Adnan M Mirza	2141	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. This communication is responsive to 05/12/2004.
2. The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-4,6-18,20-31,33 and 34.
3. The drawings filed on 03 April 2000 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All
 - b) Some*
 - c) None
 of the:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
6. CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) hereto or 2) to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
7. DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____.
7. Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. Other _____.

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An Examiner's Amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicants, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this Examiner's Amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Koon Wong on 09/02/04.

Please cancel claims 5,19,32.

Please replace the existing claims 1, 15 and 29 with the amended claims 1 15 and 29 below:

1. (Currently Amended): A method of user-defined structured interaction online, comprising the steps of: defining a social interaction genre for live computer-mediated communication between at least two users; creating an operational instance of the genre, said instance being initialized to a predetermined state; monitoring input from the at least two users operatively connected to said instance; specifying a graphic representation depicting a state of the instance, said graphic representation comprising graphic symbols representing each of the users; updating the state of the instance and responding to user requests if said input satisfies a criteria set by the instance's interaction rules; and broadcasting the updated state to all the at least two users operatively connected to the instance; wherein the graphic representation includes specified distances from references to proportionally represent action or nonaction of users.

15. (Currently amended): A method of user-defined structured interaction online comprising the step of: defining a social interaction genre for computer-mediated communication between at least two users, wherein said social interaction genre enables a first user to ask a question to a second user, the second user to ask for clarification to the question to the first user, and the second user to answer the question to the first user; creating an operational instance of the genre, said instance being initialized to a predetermined state; monitoring input from the at least two users operatively connected to said instance; updating a state of the instance and executing specified actions in response to enforcement rules; and broadcasting the updated state to all the at least two users operatively connected to the instance; wherein said step of updating the state of the instance and executing specified actions in response to enforcement rules includes modifying an ionic representation of a user violating said rules in a graphic representation of the genre instance.

29. (Currently amended): A computer-based medium having stored programs readable by a computer for causing the computer to execute method steps for facilitating interaction among a plurality of users operatively connected to the computer, the method comprising the steps of: receiving requests from the plurality of users to participate in a computer-mediated social interactive discussion between the users, each of said users represented by a graphic symbol; registering said users by storing user identifications and passwords of respective users; storing said identifications and passwords of respective users; storing said identifications and passwords in a user database; authorizing said users as participants in the interactive discussion and informing the participants of the parameters and rules; monitoring inputs from the participants during the interactive discussion; enforcing penalties upon participants violating said rules; wherein said step of enforcing penalties includes associating violation data with user data of violating participants in the user database.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Adnan Mirza whose telephone number is (703) 305-4633. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 9:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor Rupal Dharia, can be reached on (703) 305-4003. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are listed hereinbelow.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-3800/4700. Customer service number is (703) 306-5631.

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

or faxed to:

(703) 872-9306

Hand-delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park II, 2021 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA., Fourth Floor (Receptionist).

09/03/04

Allowance

1. Claims 1-4,6-18,20-31,33-34

2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The prior art references most closely resembling the Applicant's claimed invention are Rosin et al (U.S. 6,295,057) and Williams et al (U.S. 5,945,988).

As to claim 1 First Rosin discloses an Internet on-demand system for television presenting Internet content and traditional television programming as part of a single coherent interface. Although Rosin describes user interaction via the Internet, the interaction is between a user and on-demand system, and not between two or more people. Rosin did not teach, "defining a social interaction genre for live computer-mediated communication between two or more people" and didn't include the graphic representation includes specified distances from references to proportionally represent action or non-action of users. According to the invention the graphic representation consists of logos representing users and move according to the action or non-action of the users proportion to the User's Logo.

William teaches training the entertainment system using an on-screen questionnaire, wherein the user is asked to select from a list of program genres that he/she enjoys watching. In Williams the system is asking the question via a questionnaire rather than the user. William did not teach the graphic representation includes specified distances from references to proportionally represent action or non-action of users. According to the invention the graphic representation consists of

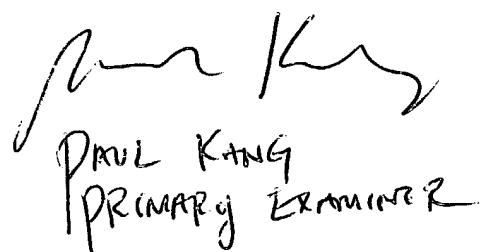
logos representing users and move according to the action or non-action of the users proportion to the User's Logo.

As to claim 15 Rosin and William combine failed to disclose "wherein said step of updating the state of the instance and executing specified actions in response to enforcement rules includes modifying an ionic representation of a user violating said rules in a graphic representation of the genre instance".

As to claim 29 Rosin and William combine failed to disclose "wherein said step of enforcing penalties includes associating violation data with user data of violating participants in the user database".

In summary, the Examiner submits claims 1-4,6-18,20-31,33-34 have been deemed allowable over the prior art.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."



PAUL KANG
PRIMARY EXAMINER